

Sec. 3726. Payment for transportation

(a) A carrier or freight forwarder presenting a bill for transporting an individual or property for the United States Government may be paid before the Administrator of General Services conducts an audit, in accordance with regulations that the Administrator shall prescribe. A claim under this section shall be allowed only if it is received by the Administrator not later than 3 years (excluding time of war) after the later of the following dates:

- (1) accrual of the claim;
 - (2) payment for the transportation is made;
 - (3) refund for an overpayment for the transportation is made;
- or
- (4) a deduction under subsection (b) of this section is made.

(b) Not later than 3 years (excluding time of war) after the time a bill is paid, the Government may deduct from an amount subsequently due a carrier or freight forwarder an amount paid on the bill that was greater than the rate allowed under -

- (1) a lawful tariff under title 49 or on file with the Secretary of Transportation with respect to foreign air transportation (as defined in section 40102(a) of title 49), the Federal Maritime Commission, or a State transportation authority;
- (2) a lawfully quoted rate subject to the jurisdiction of the Surface Transportation Board; or
- (3) sections 10721, 13712, and 15504 of title 49 or an equivalent arrangement or an exemption.

(c) Expenses of transportation audit postpayment contracts and contract administration, and the expenses of all other transportation audit and audit-related functions conferred upon the Administrator of General Services, shall be financed from overpayments collected from carriers on transportation bills paid by the Government and other similar type refunds, not to exceed collections. Payment to any contractor for audit services shall not exceed 50 percent of the overpayment identified by contract audit.

(d) At least annually, and as determined by the Administrator, after making adequate provision for expense of refunds to carriers, transportation audit postpayment contracts, contract administration, and other expenses authorized in subsection (c), overpayments collected by the General Services Administration shall be transferred to miscellaneous receipts of the Treasury. A report of receipts, disbursements, and transfers (to miscellaneous receipts) pursuant to this section shall be made annually in connection with the budget estimates to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget and to the Congress.

(e) The Administrator may delegate any authority conferred by this section to another agency or agencies if the Administrator determines that such a delegation would be cost-effective or otherwise in the public interest.

(f) Under regulations the head of an agency prescribes that conform with standards the Secretary of the Treasury prescribes, a bill under this section may be paid before the transportation is completed notwithstanding section 3324 of this title when a carrier or freight forwarder issues the usual document for the transportation. Payment for transportation ordered but not provided may be recovered by deduction or other means.

(g)

- (1) A carrier or freight forwarder may request the Administrator of General

Services to review the action of the Administrator if the request is received not later than 6 months (excluding time of war) after the Administrator acts or within the time stated in subsection (a) of this section, whichever is later.

(2) This section does not prevent the Comptroller General from conducting an audit under chapter 35 of this title.